

D. Courthouse Tours

Objective	Through courthouse tours, visitors gain direct access to and understanding of the third branch of government. Courthouse tours make the procedures, laws, issues, and officials of the justice system real for visitors of all ages and backgrounds. With direct access come increased public awareness and understanding of the impact the justice system can have on the lives of individuals.
Potential Audience	Elementary students; scouts; community groups such as the League of Women Voters, American Association of Retired Persons, NAACP; religious organizations; law students and foreign students; service organizations.
Format	Judges, staff, and volunteers lead tour groups through various areas of the courthouse, including the law library, courtrooms, and prisoner reception. Other agencies that may be involved are the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Sheriff's Department (not an exhaustive list).
Content	History of the courthouse, role of various departments, courtroom observation, career opportunities, question/answer period with the judge. Videotapes, lesson plans, and brochures can be used to supplement information presented during the tour.
Getting the Word Out	Send notices to community organizations, professional associations, schools, and libraries, informing them of the availability of tours and how to schedule a tour. (See <i>Samples & Tools</i> for a sample news release and flyer.)
Evaluation	Brief survey forms can be distributed to visitors asking them both to evaluate the tour content, presentation, location, and timing and to suggest issues of interest for future tours. Include a request for information about other groups or organizations that may be interested in a courthouse tour. (See <i>Samples & Tools</i> .)



Key Points for Organizing a Courthouse Tour Program

1. Designate a coordinator.
2. Develop format and content of the tours that will be provided. Assess the strengths of your courthouse and your potential tour (i.e., history of the courthouse, technological innovation, artwork).
3. Identify potential tour leaders both inside and outside the court.
4. Identify prospective groups who would be interested in taking a tour.
5. Prepare courthouse tour procedures and guidelines.
6. Prepare a script for tour guides.
7. Consider how courthouse tours could be included as a component in other court outreach programs (e.g., youth and school programs).
8. Send announcements to organizations and the news media about the availability of tours and scheduling.

The **Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento**, has developed a complete courthouse tour manual. Portions of this manual are excerpted in *Samples & Tools*. (Contact: Vicki Curd, 916-440-6019.)



What Works

Traditionally, courts around the country have opened their doors to the public with courthouse tours. Many tours are directed to students in elementary, junior, and senior high schools. This is an excellent way for young children and teens to get a firsthand look at the justice system and the impact it can have on their lives. And for the courts, tours plant the seeds for future public understanding and support. In organizing student tours, it's beneficial to work in partnership with schools and school boards. (See also Section 5A, *Working with Youth and Schools*.)

Teaching Aids

Brochures, videotapes, manuals, and other instructional materials can increase the depth and value of courthouse tours.

For over 20 years, the **San Diego Bar Association** has conducted half-day tours for sixth graders at the San Diego Superior Court in Vista, downtown and El Cajon. (Contact: Marilyn Laurence, 619-531-4484.)

The San Diego Bar Association also funded a 45-minute video and lesson plan book on the justice system for teachers to use before the trip. These materials are offered free of charge to sixth-grade teachers in the area who attend a planning and orientation session. In this way, teachers who are not able to attend a courthouse tour are able to use these materials appropriately in classes. (Contact: Linda Saxon, 619-756-9106.)

The **California Judges Association** has developed a brochure (in English and Spanish) called ***Welcome to Your Courts***. This brochure provides older students or adults some useful background information on the courts before they begin their tour. The brochure contains information on the three branches of government; the difference between the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and trial courts; court cases (e.g., criminal, civil, juvenile); court personnel; pretrial procedures; the trial; sentencing or judgment; and appeals. (Contact: California Judges Association, 415-495-1999.)

Expanded Tours

Courthouse tours can be expanded to expose visitors to other areas of the justice system. **Juvenile Hall Open House** is hosted by the **Superior Court of California, County of Orange** and the **Orange County Probation Department** with the involvement of the



Marshal's Department and the **Probation Community Action Association**. With a presentation and question/answer session conducted by the Juvenile Court judge, these tours give visitors an inside look at the juvenile justice system and Juvenile Hall. (Contact: Kari Sheffield, 714-935-6600.)

Reaching Adults

The benefits of courthouse tours to both the courts and the public can be increased by making the tours available and attractive to adults, including those with a professional interest in the justice system. Ways to make this happen are to: (1) extend availability of tours beyond normal court hours; (2) add components to the tour that address specific interests of the group; and (3) conduct special tours tailored to the group requesting the tour.

Since 1991 the public affairs officer at the **San Diego Superior Court** has led tours for special groups in an ongoing effort to supplement the half-day student tour program. The special tours, commonly arranged for foreign students, law students, and dignitaries, include a short orientation and a question/answer session with the presiding judge, followed by visits to a civil trial, criminal trial, and the supervising criminal department. The standard presentation addresses the questions typically asked by these groups. (Contact: Marilyn Laurence, 619-531-4484.)

Another way of reaching more adults is by recruiting them as volunteers to conduct tours. This approach is particularly helpful to courts with limited staff and resources. With the volunteer leadership of the **Beverly Hills Law Guild**, the **Beverly Hills Municipal Court** provides opportunities for students in grades 5 through 12 to tour various areas of the courthouse, observe a trial, and participate in a mock trial. The Law Guild recruits volunteer docents by placing an ad in the newspaper. To become a docent, volunteers must complete a ten-week training course that includes observing tours and writing a script they will use when conducting a tour. Twenty docents are on hand to conduct these tours. The Beverly Hills Historical Society and Beverly Hills Bar Association also lend their support to this program. (Contact: Joseph Padilla, 310-288-1288.)

Video Tours

People who can't get to the courthouse can have the courthouse come to them on a video or can use the Internet to experience "virtual tours." The URL address for **Los Angeles Superior Court's** virtual courtroom is www.co.la.ca.us/courts/superior-auc/Lawday. (Contact: Jerianne Hayslett, 213-974-5227.)



The **El Cajon Municipal Court** and the **Department of Media and Public Relations, County of San Diego** produced *New Faces of the Court*, a video tour to provide information about the courthouse facility, activities, and services and to recruit prospective employees. The production is being broadcast on the County Television Network and presented to schools and civic organizations and at local job fairs. (Contact: Brenda Lussier, 619-441-4685.)

Some Advice

Enthusiastic support of the full bench is critical for making a positive impression on tour participants whatever their age and background. Successful tours invite participants to meet the people behind the scenes and observe and participate in the process.

When recruiting volunteer docents, look for community- and civic-minded individuals who care about the court in a positive way and who see their role as a mission rather than “just a job.” The most effective docents make their tours fun, creative, and different. In the initial screening process, ask prospective docents to complete an application for the position. (See Section 4 for more information on recruiting and training a variety of volunteers.)

When you begin organizing a tour, keep in mind that once the program is available, it never stops. In some areas, tours (especially school tours) are so popular that participants must book them a year in advance.

With student tours have at least 2 docents per 20 students.



Samples & Tools

- ✓ **Sample:** **Courthouse Tour Manual**
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento
- ✓ **Tool:** **News Release**
- ✓ **Tool:** **Promotional Flyer**
- ✓ **Tool:** **Evaluation Form**



COURTHOUSE TOURS AND THE ROLE OF THE SPECIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR

The Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento offers a tour of the main courthouse facility to local elementary and high schools and to individual groups. The Special Services Coordinator schedules, confirms, and conducts these tours. The Coordinator also recruits volunteers to assist in conducting courthouse tours.

The following material covers:

1. Courthouse Tour Process and Guidelines
2. Courtroom Observation Guidelines
3. Special Tours
4. Courthouse Tour Statistics
5. Courthouse Tour Forms and Correspondence

COURTHOUSE TOUR PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

I. SCHEDULING:

The Court's Special Services Coordinator schedules tours on a first come, first serve basis. Tours are calendared for Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tours begin at 10:00 a.m. at the main courthouse entrance (fountain side) and last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

II. GROUP SIZE AND AGE:

Maximum tour group size is 30 students with a minimum requirement of 2 additional adults. Minimum school grade for courthouse tour is 6th grade.

III. TOUR AGENDA:

Includes:

1. A history of the courthouse
2. A presentation by the Law Librarian
3. Viewing the basement area where prisoners are received
4. Courtroom observation
(*Note: Family law and sexual crime cases are excluded from courtroom observation.*)



5. Talking to a judge
6. Viewing the jury lounge and La Casita
7. An overview of the court system

Tour visitors also view and sit in an empty courtroom. When requested and available, tour agenda may also include a mock trial and a presentation by a Court Interpreter or a Court Security Officer. The Coordinator will contact the appropriate department head to acquire these individuals.

IV. TOUR GUIDES:

Guides are often community volunteers or judges' spouses recruited by the Coordinator to assist in conducting courthouse tours. Special Services staff also conduct tours.

V. TOUR SCRIPT, AGENDA, LOG:

A tour script is available for use by the Coordinator and volunteer tour guides. Coordinator uses a tour agenda and worksheet to plan the agenda of all tours and records reserved tours in the Scheduled Tours Log. These forms are a part of the Coordinator's computer files.

SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS

- Step 1.* When Special Services Coordinator receives a call requesting a reserved tour date, the Coordinator first confirms the group age range and size.
- Step 2.* If minimum age and maximum size are met, the Coordinator consults the Schedule Log to select an open tour date and enters the following information:
- School or Organization Name
 - Teacher or Guide Name
 - School or Organization Phone Number
 - If Applicable, Tour Guide's Name



- Step 3.* The Coordinator prepares and mails a tour Confirmation letter to school or organization within 30 days of the reserved date. The Coordinator places a copy of the confirmation letter in Scheduled Log file. This letter confirms tour date and time and contains details on group control and discipline.
- Step 4.* Within 24 hours of reserved tour date, the Coordinator calls the school or organization to confirm against cancellation and to begin preparing tour agenda.

TOUR AGENDA COORDINATION

- Step 1.* The Special Services Coordinator obtains a Tour Contact Log and Agenda Worksheet. These documents are a part of the Coordinator's computer files. The Coordinator places call to various courtrooms and secure a judge and courtroom for observation. Coordinator records the following information:
- Date
 - Judge Name and Department Number
 - Contact Person and Extension Number
 - Comments (talk or courtroom observation)
 - Tour Content Information
- Step 2.* The Coordinator calls the Law Librarian to confirm availability.
- Step 3.* The Coordinator calls Master Calendar to request available courtroom for overview presentation.
- Step 4.* When tour agenda is established, the Coordinator obtains and prepares the Courthouse Tour agenda. This document is a part of the Coordinator's computer files. Note: Special agendas require advance notification and approval of appropriate department supervisors.



CONDUCTING COURTHOUSE TOURS

1. The tour guide greets the visiting group at the main courthouse entrance at 10:00 am and follows the tour agenda as outlined. Guide gives group historic information about the courthouse.
2. The visiting group is then escorted to the Law Library.
3. While the 1st group is with the Law Librarian, the 2nd group remains with the tour guide. Guide gives the group information on how one becomes a judge and takes questions and answers from group. When 1st group returns, 2nd group goes into Law Library and the tour guide addresses the 1st group. When 2nd group returns, the visiting group is escorted to the next location.
4. The next tour event is courtroom observation. The visiting group then proceeds to the designated courtroom. Prior to entering courtroom, the tour guide informs court attendant or bailiff and receives approval to enter. The tour guide instructs the group to enter quietly, be seated quickly, and remain quiet during trial observation.

Entering and exiting courtroom is done at moments that minimize disruption. Observation lasts approximately 20 minutes.
5. The next event is meeting and talking to a judge. Prior to entering courtroom, the tour guide informs the court attendant or bailiff and receives approval to enter. Question and answer sessions with a judge last approximately 10–15 minutes.
6. Next, the tour guide escorts the visiting group to view the jury lounge and tells how one becomes a juror.
7. The next event is a visit to the children's waiting room. The tour guide gives the group historic background on the children's waiting room and tells of volunteer opportunities in the children's waiting room.



8. The tour guide escorts the visiting group to the main courthouse entrance and answers any final questions. The guide thanks the group for their interest and participation and returns charge of the visiting group to the group instructor.

COURTROOM OBSERVATION

The Special Services Coordinator offers Courtroom Observation Tours to junior and senior high schools and to individual groups. The Coordinator schedules and confirms these tours. Courtroom Observation Tours consist of small groups of no more than 5 or 6 persons going into several courtrooms and observing actual trials. Since this is not a conducted tour, special guidelines are provided, in writing, to the touring groups by the Coordinator. These guidelines contain a brief history of the Sacramento Courthouse and rules of courtroom etiquette that make the Courtroom Observation Tour more enjoyable.

COURTROOM OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

I. SCHEDULING:

The Special Services Coordinator schedules Courtroom Observation Tours on a first come, first serve basis. Observation tours are scheduled Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Tours begin at 8:45 a.m. The duration of these tours is determined by the school's teacher or the group's director.

II . GROUP SIZE:

Maximum tour group size is 30 students with a requirement of 1 adult for every group of 5 students.

III. TOUR AGENDA:

Courtroom Observation Tour visitors go to various courtrooms and view trials. No prepared agenda is necessary.



IV. TOUR GUIDES:

Since Courtroom Observation Tours are not conducted tours, no tour guides are necessary.

V. TOUR SCRIPT:

Since Courtroom Observation Tours are not conducted tours, no tour script is necessary.

SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS

Step 1. When the Special Services Coordinator receives a call requesting a reserved tour date, the Coordinator first determines the age or grade of the school group. When it is determined to be a junior or senior high school or an adult group, the Coordinator states that the group qualifies for a non-conducted Courtroom Observation Tour.

Step 2. The Coordinator consults the Schedule Log to select an open tour date. The Schedule Log is a part of the Coordinator's computer files and is available for this purpose. On the Schedule Log the Coordinator enters the following information:

1. School or Organization Name
2. Number of Participants
3. Teacher or Director Name
4. School or Organization Phone Number
5. A notation that group needs a trial calendar only

Step 3. The Coordinator tells the caller:

1. This is a non-conducted tour, which begins at 8:45 a.m.
2. Upon arrival, have the group wait for the teacher/director outside the courthouse (fountain side). The teacher/director will then go inside the courthouse to the Master Calendar Department.



3. Master Calendar is located on the 6th floor of the courthouse, in Room 609. The Master Calendar Department opens for business at 8:30 a.m.
4. At the Master Calendar Unit front counter, request a copy of the day's trial calendar. The Deputy Clerk will provide the teacher/director with a copy.
5. The teacher/director then returns to his/her group. The teacher/director divides the group into small groups of no more than 5 persons. The teacher/director then assigns an adult over each group and escorts the group into the courthouse for court trial observation.
6. The Coordinator will mail a document to the teacher/director entitled Courtroom Observation Guidelines. This document contains rules of courtroom etiquette that will make the tour an enjoyable experience.
7. The teacher/director will receive a confirmation letter confirming the tour date and time.

Step 4 After speaking to the group teacher/director, the Coordinator sends a confirmation letter to the group teacher/director. This document is a part of the Coordinator's computer files. A copy of this letter is retained in the Coordinator's files.

Step 5 On the Courtroom Observation Tour date, if the group teacher/director has not received the confirmation, it may become necessary for the Coordinator to be involved. The Coordinator may be contacted by the teacher/director upon his/her arrival at the courthouse. The Coordinator then refers the teacher/director to the Master Calendar Unit for a copy of the day's trial calendar.



COURTROOM OBSERVATION PROCESS

1. Groups entering a courtroom for observation can contain no more than 5 persons. An adult must preside over each group or a group cannot enter the courtroom.
2. When entering courtrooms for observation, enter quickly and take a seat quietly. Rules for courtroom behavior and courtroom etiquette allow no talking, whispering, giggling, rustling of papers, hats, excessive noises (sneezes or coughs), or movement in your seats. These constitute disruptions that the judge will not tolerate and that make it difficult for the Court Reporter to record what is being said in the courtroom.
3. If any person or persons in your group are asked to leave the courtroom by the judge, bailiff, courtroom clerk, or court attendant, they must leave immediately and **without argument**.
4. It is expected that you will show respect to all court staff, security officers, and private individuals you meet while you are in the courthouse. Failure to meet this expectation will result in notification of your school principal or agency director.
5. It is expected that you will treat carefully the property within the courthouse. This includes bathrooms, water fountains, elevators, phone booths, and the cafeteria. Failure to meet this expectation will result in notification of your school principal or agency director.

HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTO COURTHOUSE

This courthouse was built in 1965 at a cost of \$8 million. It has six floors and a basement. The front part of the building is open to the public, but the back area is secured. People in custody are transported in the back hallways, and seldom if ever, will you see a prisoner in the front halls. This is the 4th courthouse built in Sacramento County. The first one was built in 1851 after the Gold Rush in the area that is now Old Sacramento. It burned down in 1852, and in the following years two more buildings were constructed. But they both became obsolete, which is to say that they became too small and outdated for what they were originally designed for. Unfortunately, this building is becoming obsolete too and is so crowded that several departments and offices have been moved to nearby buildings, and even the main jail has four courtrooms, with four judges, where arraignments are held for in custody prisoners. It is overcrowded because 85% of the court's cases now have something to do with drugs and/or alcohol related crimes.



SPECIAL TOURS

The Special Services Coordinator schedules special tour groups containing 90 to 120 individuals. These groups annually tour the courthouse for trial observation only. The Coordinator's involvement in these tours is minimal. It is important that the Coordinator alert Courthouse Security when groups of this size are scheduled.

Special tour groups include, but are not limited to:

1. Hiram Johnson Government in Action Class
2. Capitol Focus
3. International Attorneys and Judges Tour

SPECIAL TOUR: HIRAM JOHNSON GOVERNMENT IN ACTION CLASS

Teacher: MR. LARRY WARREN
(916) 277-6300

Group Size: 100 Students
from Hiram Johnson Sr. High

Tour Length: 4 hours (begins at 8:30 a.m.)

Step 1. Mr. Larry Warren calls the Special Services Coordinator to request two separate tour dates. The Coordinator consults the Schedule Log to determine an available tour date. The Schedule Log is a part of the Coordinator's computer files. Mr. Warren brings in 50 students each day. Each student in the group wears a badge, generated by the school, for easy identification.

Step 2. The Coordinator makes available 100 copies of the trial calendar dated the day before the scheduled tour date. A copy of this calendar is obtained from the Master Calendar Unit on the 6th floor of the courthouse, Room 609. Mr. Warren will pick up these copies the day before the scheduled tour date.



The Coordinator also provides this group with 100 copies of a special Field Trip Instruction Sheet and journal. These documents are part of the Coordinator's computer files. Mr. Warren will also pick up these documents the day before the scheduled tour date.

- Step 3.* The Coordinator contacts the Lieutenant of Courthouse Security, alerting him/her of this group's scheduled tour date. A copy of this memo is retained in the Coordinator's files. This is the extent of the involvement of the Special Services Coordinator in coordinating this Courtroom Observation Tour.

**HIRAM JOHNSON GOVERNMENT IN ACTION CLASS
(FIELD TRIP TO THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY COURTHOUSE)**

Name: _____ Period : _____

PARKING OPTIONS AND MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

- A.
1. Park along C St. and 7th St. (meters)
 2. Park in county lot at 7th and G Sts./\$.75 per half hour (entrance is across from Sheriff's Dept.).
 3. Non-metered parking on C St.
 4. There is a lot at 12th & I Sts., from which you can walk to the courthouse.
 5. Park in the garage of the County Library.
 6. Carpool
 7. Regional Transit
- B. All students must meet me on the east steps of the courthouse at 8:30 a.m. for a short orientation. Then we will go inside past the metal detectors. (Leave anything that would trigger them at home, please.) Once inside, students will remain in small groups of three or four. We will tour the main floor. Check the directories across from the elevator.
- C. Next we will go up to the second floor and to the south end to the jury lounge. We will go in and check it out. However, if it is crowded, only one group may go in at a time. The remaining groups will observe trial in the courtrooms on the second floor.



- D. Across from the jury lounge is the Interpreter's Office. Interpreters are assigned from this office to trial courts requesting a non-English-speaking interpreter. Then go to the south end and visit La Casita, the court's children's waiting room. At 8:45 a.m. you will begin observation of various court trials.
- E. You are expected to maintain a journal that completely and thoroughly details your activities at the courthouse. Your journal will detail the following:
1. Time and date of trial
 2. Department number
 3. Who is the presiding judge?
 4. The nature of the cases observed (criminal, civil etc.)

Keep detailed notes relating to the role of the judge, the different attorneys, and the court procedure, procedures exercised relative to the jury, *voir dire*, etc.

- F. During the course of this field trip (two days) each student must observe each of the following procedures. Consult your court directory for floor numbers. There are also directories located in every elevator. Spend at least 1 to 1 1/2 hours observing the following:
1. Jury Trials (all floors)
 2. Arraignments (Depts. 1, 2, 3)
 3. Preliminary Hearings (Dept. 4)
 4. Civil Cases (mostly on the 4th & 5th floors)
 5. Civil Settlement Cases
 6. Criminal Cases (held on various floors/especially Depts. 1, 2)
 7. Jury Selection (throughout the courthouse)
 8. Probate Proceedings (Depts. 17, 18)
 9. Divorce Court (Depts. 11, 12, 13)
 10. Juvenile Law and Motions (in the jail in Depts. 60, 61, 62, 63)
 11. Try to follow a major crime and a lesser crime



COURTROOM ETIQUETTE

The courtroom is the last bastion of dignity in the United States. *Courtly* means dignified. One should dress and act as though he or she were meeting the ruler of a country, for the courts are the highest authority in the land.

Before Attending Court:

1. Dress very neatly
2. No food, gum, or anything that rattles
3. No drinks, cameras, or tape recorders
4. No hats in the courtroom

During Court Session:

1. Sit very quietly. The bailiff will remove you from the courtroom if you are not very quiet. This means no laughing, whispering, giggling, talking, or applauding.
2. Be attentive and do not change seats
3. **When there is no action in the courtroom**, leave quickly and quietly. Do not talk until the door is closed and you are outside the courtroom.
Remember that distractions could be disastrous to a court case.
4. Blend in with the furniture, and do not make any contact with jury members. **IT WILL CAUSE A MISTRIAL AND OPEN YOU AND THE SCHOOL TO PROSECUTION,**
5. Never leave while a witness is on the stand or discussion is in progress.

There are over 50 different courtrooms for you to attend! Spread out and cover all bases. And don't forget the cafeteria on the 6th floor. Many cases are argued and settled here. Use your ears, not your mouths!

On Thursday we will walk down to the main jail. We will observe trials in Depts. 61, 62, 63.

Most judges take a break between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. Most have court at 11:00 a.m.

Most judges prefer only litigants, attorneys, and jurors in their courtroom. So avoid being the reason this is so.



SACRAMENTO COUNTY COURTHOUSE FIELD TRIP JOURNAL

You must include all of the following:

1. Date and time of trial
2. Department number
3. Who is the trial judge?
4. What is nature of the case? (criminal, civil, etc.)
5. Detailed notes relating to the role of the judge, different attorneys, court procedures, jury instructions

Date:

1st Stop Time:_____ Department #:_____ Judge:_____
Case Type:
Details:

2nd Stop Time:_____ Department #:_____ Judge:_____
Case Type:
Details:

3rd Stop Time:_____ Department #:_____ Judge:_____
Case Type:
Details:



SPECIAL TOUR: CAPITOL FOCUS

Director: MS. HILDA TORRES
(916) 443-2229

Group Size: 120 Students
from a non-profit agency's Spring Youth Program

Tour Length: 1 – 2 hours (begins at 9:30 a.m.)

Step 1. Ms. Torres calls the Special Services Coordinator to request a Courtroom Observation Tour date. The Coordinator consults the Schedule Log to determine an available tour date. The Schedule Log is a part of the Coordinator's computer files. The entire group of 120 individuals will appear on the scheduled tour date.

Step 2. The Coordinator contacts the Lieutenant of Courthouse Security, alerting him/her of this group's scheduled tour date.

Step 3. Ms. Torres sends the Coordinator a confirmation letter confirming the tour's scheduled arrival date and time. It is not necessary for the Coordinator to send a confirmation letter. This is the extent of the involvement of the Special Services Coordinator in coordinating this Courtroom Observation Tour.

SPECIAL TOUR: INTERNATIONAL JUDGES TOUR

Director: MS. LISA DOUGLAS
(916) 757-8894

Group Size: 90–100 International Attorneys and Judges from UCD's USA Law Program

Tour Length: 2–3 hours (begins at 9:00 a.m.)

English Comprehension Level: College



TOUR CONTENT

- A. Welcome/Orientation from the Court's Presiding Judge
- B. Presentation regarding Court Consolidation from the Court's Executive Officer
- C. An Overview of the USA's Family Law System from the Court's Family Law Judge
- D. A 20-minute Break
- E. An Overview of the USA's Criminal Law System From One of the Court's Criminal Court Judges
- F. An Overview of the USA's Civil Law System from one of the Court's Civil Court Judges

INITIAL CONTACT

- Step 1.* The Coordinator receives a call from Ms. Douglas, the Associate Director of UCD's USA Law Program. Her call is received in November/December as a reminder of the July tour. Traditionally, the International Attorneys and Judges tour is an annual tour scheduled for the last week of July.
- Step 2.* The Special Services Coordinator consults the Schedules Log and reserves the July tour date. The Schedule Log is a part of the Coordinator's computer files. Ms. Douglas responds by sending the Coordinator a letter confirming the tour's date and time. The entire group of 90–100 adults will appear on the scheduled tour date.



SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS

Step 3. **A month prior to the scheduled tour date,** the Coordinator contacts the Court's Judicial Services Officer. The Judicial Services Officer assists in coordinating this tour by contacting and reserving the necessary court judges and by preparing and printing the tour agenda.

Step 4. The Coordinator contacts the Court Manager of the Master Calendar Unit and requests that Court Department 1 be reserved for the July tour date.

Step 5. The Coordinator contacts the Court's Executive Officer. The Court's Executive Officer confirms his/her presence and presentation for the July tour date.

Step 6. The Coordinator receives a copy of the tour agenda from the Court's Judicial Services Officer. The Coordinator makes the appropriate number of copies and sends one to each of the judges shown on the agenda as reserved for this tour. The Coordinator also sends a copy of the tour agenda to the Court's Executive Officer.

Step 7. The Coordinator contacts the Lieutenant of Courthouse Security, alerting him/her of this group's scheduled tour date.

CONDUCTING THE INTERNATIONAL ATTORNEYS AND JUDGES TOUR

Step 8. The Coordinator makes an additional copy of the tour agenda and meets Ms. Douglas and the group on the fountain side of the courthouse building at 9:00 a.m.

Step 9. The Special Services Coordinator gives a brief presentation on the history of the Sacramento Courthouse and escorts the group into the building. The Coordinator then escorts the group to Court Department 1 to begin the tour program.

Step 10. When the group is seated, the Coordinator introduces the first speaker, the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento.



Step 11. After each presentation, the Coordinator introduces the next speaker shown on the tour agenda.

Step 12. After the presentation by the Court's Family Law Judge, the Coordinator informs the group that it is time for a break period. The Coordinator states that the break period is 20 minutes in duration and informs the group of the location of the restrooms and the cafeteria.

Step 13. When the break period is over, the Coordinator goes to the 6th floor cafeteria and makes an announcement over the PA system that any participants of the tour should return to Department 1.

Announcement:

"Will all participants of the International Attorneys and Judges Tour, please return to Department 1. Will all participants of the International Attorneys and Judges Tour please return to Department 1."

Step 14. When all participants have returned and are seated, the Coordinator presents the next speaker listed on the tour agenda.

TOUR FOLLOW-UP

Step 15. After the end of the presentation by the last speaker shown on the agenda, the Coordinator thanks the group for their attendance and attention. The Coordinator then dismisses the group to return to their transportation.

Step 16. The Special Services Coordinator sends a thank-you note or card to all the court judges who participated in the International Attorneys and Judges Tour. These are the judges listed on the tour agenda.

The Coordinator will receive a letter from Ms. Douglas, thanking the court for participating in this event.



SAMPLE COURTHOUSE TOUR AGENDA
JUNE 19, 1997

TOUR GUIDE: VICKI CURD
Special Services Coordinator

GROUP: MARK HOPKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (30 students/3
adults)

TEACHER: MR. WEATHERALL

AREA 1 Main Courthouse Entrance — 10:00 a.m.

AREA 2 Overview — 10:00 a.m.

AREA 3 Courtroom Observation — 10:45 a.m.
Judge Cecily Bond

AREA 4 Talk to the Judge — 11:00 a.m.
Judge Gary Mullen

AREA 5 Jury Lounge
La Casita

AREA 6 Main Entrance
Group Dismissed



COURTHOUSE TOUR SCRIPT AND INFORMATION

1. MEET THE BUS

Ask the teacher to divide the children into 2 groups for all elevator travel, entrances to courtroom, jury room, bathroom runs, and to pass through security.

2. REVIEW THE AGENDA

Tell the teacher to get the students quiet and to introduce you.

“Hello, my name is _____ and I’m your tour guide. Today I’m going to give you a tour of the Courthouse and explain to you how our legal system operates and the meanings of some of the legal words. You will see where some of the various departments within the Courthouse are located and visit the basement to view the area where prisoners are brought from the various county jails for their arraignments, hearings, or trials. We will also visit the jury lounge on the 2nd floor and then go into a real courtroom to watch a case in progress. We will all need to be very quiet as we go through the halls outside the courtrooms. There are trials being held in there. Inside the courtroom no hats can be worn and no noise or gum chewing is allowed. As you pass through the immediate security monitors you are likely to beep because of metal material on you.”

3. AFTER SECURITY, HAVE ALL STUDENTS ASSEMBLE UNDER THE 2ND FLOOR STAIRCASE

“This courthouse was built in 1965 at a cost of \$8 million. It has six floors and a basement. The front part of the building is open to the public, but the back area is secured. People in custody are transported in the back hallways, and seldom, if ever, will you see a prisoner in the front halls. This is the 4th courthouse built in Sacramento County. The first one was built in 1851 after the Gold Rush in the area that is now Old Sacramento. It burned down in 1852, and in the following years two more buildings were constructed. But they both became obsolete and so the present one was built.

Unfortunately, this building is becoming obsolete too, and it is so crowded that several departments and offices have been moved to nearby buildings, and even the main jail has four courtrooms, with four judges, where arraignments are held for in-custody prisoners.

Can you tell me why you think the courts are so overcrowded?



Because 85% of all criminal cases have something to do with drugs and/or alcohol. Now if you'll please follow me to the elevators we will go down to the lower level of this building where the Law Library is located."

4. MAKE SURE THE GROUP IS DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS FOR ELEVATOR RIDES

Reassemble below and lead them to the hallway just outside the library.

"The Law Library is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. excluding holidays. It contains books on the laws, statutes, and legislation for the State of California. You can find precedents that have changed the law in the Law Library as well. This library is visited by judges, attorneys, and the general public."

5. GO INSIDE TO HEAR THE LIBRARIAN SPEAK

6. GARAGE

"There are 3 cameras in the garage (point them out to students). Prisoners are brought over for their trials from 651 I Street (the jail). If the person getting out of the van is wearing:

yellow	Rio Consumnes jail
white/black	Downtown county jail
black	Protective custody prisoner
orange	Folsom Prison felon
red	Out-of-state felon/very dangerous

When the security vans arrive with prisoners, the outside gate goes up, bells go off, and lights flash inside the garage to signal its arrival. The van backs into the parking space and the prisoners are unloaded and escorted to a holding tank until they are ready for them to be brought inside the courtroom.

There is also a blue box by the gate. This is where police officers or highway patrol officers leave their guns when they go into the courthouse, because the only person allowed to be armed in the courthouse are the bailiffs that are in the courtroom for the judge's protection. Now we'll head to the second floor where we can view the jury lounge."



7. TAKE TWO ELEVATORS TO THE 2ND FLOOR AND HAVE THE GROUP WAIT ON THE MEZZANINE

“Jurors or perspective jurors are chosen from the Department of Motor Vehicles list and from the voter registration lists. Voting and serving on juries when you are over 18 years of age are very important responsibilities for citizens in free countries. You are paid \$5.00 a day and must be available Monday through Friday for a 2-week period, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.”

8. LA CASITA

After exiting the jury room, assemble the group in the hall and give them information about the children’s room.

“This is the children’s waiting room, *La Casita*. Children stay here if their parents are attending court or if the child is a witness in a case. We accept children 2 1/2 years old that are potty-trained up to 16 years old. The hours of the waiting room are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. This room was established by Judge Alice Lytle so that children would have a safe haven to stay while parents were in court and also so that there would be a protected area away from confrontation if the child is a witness in an abuse case. Now, we’re going to the court department on the floor where we can view an actual trial and possibly have a chance to talk to the judge. The judge in this case is Judge _____.”

9. COURTROOM OBSERVATION

Make sure that the group remains QUIET while you approach the bailiff to ask permission to enter the courtroom to observe the proceedings. ENTER QUIETLY AND BE SEATED QUICKLY!

10. SPEAKING TO A JUDGE

If a judge has been scheduled take the group either into the judge’s chamber or into his/her empty courtroom for the judge’s presentation.

11. EMPTY COURTROOM

After speaking with the judge, take the group up the stairs to an empty courtroom if one has been made available to you. If not, return the group to the main floor for dismissal. When the group is quietly seated, continue the script.



Judge “This is where the judge sits. The judge presides over the court, decides guilt or innocence in a non-jury trial, and interprets the laws.”

“In order to be a judge you must first be an attorney. To be an attorney you have to graduate from high school, enroll in 4 years of college, then enroll in an additional 3 years of law school. After that you take what’s called the bar exam. If you pass, you are an attorney. If after that you wish to be a judge you must be in private practice as an attorney for 5 years to be a municipal court judge and 10 years to be a superior court judge.”

Court Clerk “This is where the court clerk sits. This person is the judge’s helper who writes down the judge’s orders, keeps all records and evidence and swears in witnesses.”

Court Reporter “This is where the court reporter sits. This person uses a steno type machine to keep a record of everything said in a trial. The machine is like a typewriter but one key may have the symbol for a whole word or phrase. The typing speed of a court reporter must typically be 230 wpm.”

Electronic Recorder “This is where the Electronic Recording Monitor sits. This person monitors a tape recorder that records what is being said by all in the courtroom. They basically do what the reporter does, but on tape.”

Bailiff “The bailiff is the security officer in the courtroom and is a member of the Sheriff’s Department. This person escorts witnesses to the stand. Bailiffs are also in charge of keeping the jury isolated when it is reaching its verdict.”

Court Attendant “This is where the Court Attendant sits. This person does the job of a bailiff also, but does not carry a weapon. He/She is in charge of security in the courtroom. The Court Attendant is required to wear a uniform and must be certified in the use of CPR.”



District Attorney	“This is where the District Attorney sits. There is one elected person who is called the District Attorney. Does anyone know the name of the elected person? A large staff is hired to prosecute all the cases that are turned over to the DA’s office. They represent the people or the State against the accused and must try to prove that the accused is guilty. This person may also be called a PROSECUTOR.”
Defense Attorney	<p>“This is where the Defense Attorney sits. Employed by the defendant, this person is hired to make sure his/her client’s constitutional rights are protected and, more specifically, that s/he is given a fair and proper trial, using the best arguments and evidence possible. According to the Constitution, every person is entitled to a defense.”</p> <p>“This is also where the Public Defender sits. This person is an attorney who is appointed by the court to defend an accused person who has no money to hire his/her own attorney.</p>
Plaintiff	“This is where the Plaintiff sits — the person in a civil trial who sues another. S/he is represented by his/her own attorney.”
Defendant	“This is where the Defendant sits — the person being accused of committing the crime, or in a civil suit, the person who is being sued.”

12. JUVENILE CASES

“Only adults are judged in the courthouse. Juvenile cases, with very few exceptions, are heard in Juvenile Hall on Kiefer Blvd. If a juvenile is arrested, there are specially trained juvenile officers who decide whether to release the child to his/her parents or transport him/her to Juvenile Hall. The Juvenile Court may have jurisdiction until age 25. A 16 year-old with a serious record can now be remanded to adult court at this courthouse.

“While a child is in Juvenile Hall, it’s no picnic. There are cement floors and brick walls, little furniture (and what there is, is bolted down), no personal privacy, no ownership, and no control.



“Every door needs to be opened with a key; you are locked in your room at night, and there are usually several kids to a room because of overcrowding. The children are under constant observation even when they are in the showers or going to the restroom. There are many gang members there and anything you have that they want, they’ll take. Many gang problems arise. School at the Hall is mandatory, and the people with whom you are incarcerated may be druggies, gang members, mentally or emotionally unbalanced, and dangerous people.”

13. CATEGORIES

Continue script on jurisdiction categories.

“There are two basic categories of law, criminal and civil. A criminal matter is an alleged offense against the State in which it is thought that a law has been broken.

“The DA prosecutes and a private attorney or court-appointed public defender defends the accused. There are 2 levels of severity of these crimes:

Felonies	“Murder, robbery, assault, possession of drugs are serious crimes which carry a possible sentence of more than one year in a state prison.”
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Misdemeanors	“Shoplifting and drunk driving carry a possible sentence of less than one year in the county jail.
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“Civil matters are disputes between individuals or corporations over money or property that the parties involved have been unable to settle. Superior court has jurisdiction over cases such as \$25,000 civil matters, criminal felonies, divorces, adoptions, probate matters, and juvenile cases.’

14. END OF TOUR

When this presentation is over, thank the group for their attention and the teachers/parents for all their help. Let the group know that if they have any questions about anything you didn’t cover to feel free to call the court through their teachers/parents and ask.

Escort the group back to the main lobby entrance.



COURTHOUSE TOUR CONFIRMATION SAMPLE LETTER

May 21, 1998

MARK HOPKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2221 Matson Drive
Sacramento, CA 95822

Attention: Mr. Weatherall

Re: COURTHOUSE TOUR CONFIRMATION

Dear Mr. Weatherall:

Thank you for reserving your space for what will be an educational and fun courthouse tour. This letter is your confirmation of the tour scheduled for your 6th grade class on Thursday, June 19, 1998. The tour begins in front of the courthouse, by the water fountain at 10:00 a.m.. Please make every effort to arrive on time, as late arrivals will not receive a full tour.

Prior to arrival, please have a system in place whereby the class separates into 3 groups for the purpose of elevator travel. No less than 2 adults must accompany you to assist in maintaining control. The tour guide is not responsible for controlling or disciplining your class. The tour will terminate if your class fails to obey repeated instructions. If you have any questions or need to cancel or reschedule, please call me at 440-5459/Monday through Friday/8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m..

Sincerely,

Vicki Elaine Curd
Special Services Coordinator



For more information contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[INSERT name and phone number]

Take a Closer Look at Your Justice System

Dateline—[INSERT date] [INSERT name of court] is conducting free daily tours of courthouse facilities to show visitors how the justice system works in [area].

According to [INSERT name of spokesperson], visitors can observe court in session; meet judges, attorneys, and court staff; hear about career opportunities; and learn about courthouse history.

“We want to make procedures, laws, and officials of the justice system real for people of all ages and backgrounds,” said [INSERT name]. “By taking a tour of [INSERT name] courthouse, we hope visitors will come away with a better understanding of how the justice system can affect their lives.”

For more information or to schedule a tour, contact [INSERT name, phone].



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

Court Logo

[Name of Court]

COURTHOUSE TOUR

- * Observe court in session and see how conflicts are resolved**
- * Meet judges, attorneys, and court staff**
- * Learn about career opportunities**
- * Discover courthouse history**

For more information and to schedule a tour, contact: [INSERT name, phone]



WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR VISIT?

We want to make sure that our courthouse tour met your expectations.

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and drop it in the box located (where). Thank you.

1. Scheduling my tour was:
___ very difficult ___ difficult ___ easy ___ very easy
If you encountered difficulties in scheduling your tour, what were they?

2. I was treated with courtesy in scheduling my tour.
___ yes ___ no
3. Available times to take the courthouse tour were:
___ very inconvenient ___ inconvenient ___ convenient ___ very flexible
4. The content of the tour was:
___ poor ___ fair ___ good ___ excellent
5. What did you like most about the tour? _____

6. What did you like least about the tour? _____

7. What other topics would you like to be included in the courthouse tour?

8. Do you know of any other groups that would be interested in taking a courthouse tour?
If you do, please list them here. _____

